

William R. Laws was the minister of the First Presbyterian Church for 26 years from 1950-1976. In 1970 Mr. Laws was elected moderator of the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches USA, the highest office in the Presbyterian Church. He was in a week long, Fact-Finding Consultation in Paris, France on the Paris Peace Talks. For his civic contributions in the humanities field, Mr. Laws received the Community Service Award in 1975 from the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce. He associated with numerous activities designed to meet the needs of people. He served on the boards of United Way, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, American Red Cross, Irwin Union Bank and Trust and a member of the Heritage Fund. He was also associated with the Children Inc., Driftwood Valley Arts Council, Community Resource Center, Ministry for Texas Migrant Workers in the Columbus area, and American Field Service. He established the William R. Laws Scholarship Foundation, dedicated to higher education of blacks and to the community action in civil rights. He was also instrumental in the formation of the Ecumenical Assembly and spearheaded its Equality Under the Law Committee. He was also the driving force behind the first community Good Friday service in Columbus. He received several honorary degrees, including one in 1977 from Indiana State University. Mr. Laws also worked to promote the integration of local barber shops, worked with local realtors and others to expand housing opportunities for African American community members.